

Ex. 27:20 to 30:10 Torah Reading (Parshat Tetzaveh)
English version with tropes February 25, 2021

27:20 [This you must do]: [You must command] | the children of Israel that they bring to you oil from olives [that is clear]—beaten—
[to use for the light], to keep burning the lamp continually.

21 In [the Tent of Meeting] outside the curtain that is over [the Ark of the Testimony],
[it shall be arranged] by Aaron [and his sons] from evening to morning before YHWH,
a statute for the ages throughout their generations [on behalf of] the children of Israel.

28:1 [And this you must do]: Bring [close to you] Aaron your brother and his sons [along with him]
[from among] the children of Israel [to be priests to Me]—Aaron, Nadav, [and Avihu], Elazar and Itamar, the sons of Aaron.

2 Make garments of holiness for Aaron your brother, for glory and for splendor.

3 [Also this you must do]: speak [to all who are wise of heart], whom I have filled with a spirit of wisdom,
[that they should make] the vestments—[the clothes for Aaron], to hallow him [and make him a priest to Me].

4 These are the vestments that [they must make]: a breastplate, an ephod, [and a robe], a tunic that is braided, a turban and sash.
They shall be garments of holiness, [made for] [Aaron your brother] and for his sons, [that they may be priests for Me].

5 [The skilled workers] must take the gold, [the wool of sky-blue], and of purple the wool of scarlet and the linen.

6 They shall make the ephod
[making it out of gold], sky-blue and purple, [and also scarlet] [or crimson wool] and twisted linen, the work of a craftsman.

7 [And two] shoulder-pieces [will be attached]. [This will be for the ephod] at the two ends, to join them.

8 And a woven belt [which will be] upon it, [of the same design] as the ephod it will be,
[to be made of gold], [from wool that is dyed] [sky-blue and purple], wool of scarlet and twisted linen.

9 And you shall take two [stones of onyx], and engrave [upon them] the names of the sons of Israel.

10 Six of their names on stone number one, [and the names] [of the six] [remaining sons] on stone number two, [all by their generations].

11 [Through the work] [of a craftsman] of stones, an engraver—a maker of seals, you must engrave the two stones,
with the names of the children of Israel. [Bordering them] with braids of gold you must make them.

28:12 [Then you must attach] both [of the stones] onto the shoulder of the ephod stones of remembrance, for the children of Israel.
[These he will carry]—Aaron will bear their names [in the presence] [of YHWH], [end aliyah] on his two shoulders as a memorial.

13 You must make settings of gold.

14 And two chains of gold that is pure, [made into braids] you shall fashion them thus, twisted like cords.

[And you will attach] these braided cords to the settings.

15 [And you must make] the breastplate of judgment of woven design, like the work of the ephod, you must make it,
[made out of gold], sky-blue and purple, [and also scarlet] [or crimson wool] and twisted linen, you will make it.

16 Square shall it be, and folded; a handbreath in length and a handbreath in width.

17 And fill it up with a setting of stones, four rows of stones:

[making one row] of carnelian and topaz, and (sparkling-)emerald, [thus is row] number one.

18 Now row number two: ruby and sapphire and beryl.

19 And row number three: hyacinth, agate and amethyst.

20 Row number four: chrysolite, onyx and jasper. In braidings [made of gold] [you shall place them] in their settings.

21 [This is what the stones will contain:] [they will carry] [the names of the heads] [of the children of Israel], all twelve, with their names,
engraved as a seal, each [with its name]. [These represent] [the two and ten] tribes.

22 [And you must fashion] [there in the breastplate] chains that are twisted, braided like cords, [these being made] [of pure gold].

23 You shall make on the breastplate two rings [made of gold],

[and you must fashion] these [two rings] [on the two] top corners of the breastplate.

24 [You will then attach] the two cords made of gold to [the two rings] on the corners of the breastplate.

25 As for [the other two] ends [of the two] cords, [attach them] [to the settings].

[Thus they will be attached] to the shoulder-pieces of the ephod, facing inward.

26 [Then you will make] [another two] rings made of gold, and fasten them to the two bottom corners of the breastplate,
[on the edge] across from the ephod, inward.

28:27 [And you will fashion] [another two] rings [out of gold], and proceed [to attach them] [on the two] shoulder-pieces [of the ephod] at the bottom, on the front of its face, opposite its seam, [so they rest above] the belt of the ephod.

28 They will tie [the breastplate to hold it in place] [from its rings] to the rings of the ephod with a cord [of sky-blue wool], [to keep it] [above the belt] of the ephod [to prevent detachment] of the breastplate from its place [above the ephod].

29 [The breastplate will carry]—[Aaron will bear on his chest]—the names of *B'nei Yisrael* [on that which is called] [the Breastplate of Judgment], [over his heart], when he enters the sanctuary, as a remembrance before YHWH continually.

30 [And you shall place] in the Breastplate of Judgment the Urim and the Thumim.

They shall rest over the heart of Aaron when he comes before YHWH. [Thus he will carry]—[Aaron will have on his breast]—the judgment [of the children of Israel] [over his heart], [end aliyah] [before YHWH] continually.

31 [And you shall make] the robe for the ephod, all of sky-blue wool.

32 [It will have an opening for the head] in the middle. [A collar (a border or hem)] [there shall be] for its opening, all around, the work [of a weaver of skill], [like the opening] [of a coat-of-mail] it shall have, so that it does not tear.

33 You shall make [on the hem of the robe] pomegranates of sky-blue and purple and scarlet wool—on the hem, all around, and bells [that are made of gold] [between them], all around.

34 Thus: a bell of gold, then a pomegranate, then a bell of gold, then a pomegranate, on the hem of the robe, all around.

35 [It shall be worn by Aaron] while officiating, [so that there is heard] [the tinkling sound of the bells] [when he enters the sanctuary] [where he will appear] [before YHWH], [and when he leaves it], so that he does not die.

36 You shall make a frontlet—a plate of pure gold, with an engraving [upon it], like the inscription [of a signet ring], “[with the words]: [Holy to YHWH]”.

37 Attach [upon it] a cord [of sky-blue wool], [so it may be] on the turban. Near the front of the turban it must remain.

38 [Just so, it is to rest] on the forehead of Aaron. Thus borne by Aaron [is any sin that cleaves] [to the sacred things] sanctified by the children of Israel [for all their gifts] that are holy. [It shall be] on his forehead [at all times], to bring goodwill to them, from YHWH.

39 You shall weave the tunic of fine linen, and make the turban also of linen. And a sash you will make: the work of an embroiderer.

40 For the sons of Aaron [you will make] tunics, and you will make for them sashes. Plus caps you will make for them, for dignity and for beauty.

28:41 [You will put them] on Aaron your brother, [and on his sons] as well.
 You will then anoint them [and “fill their hand”] [(i.e. ordain them)], and consecrate them [to be priests for Me].
 42 And make [for them] [pants of linen] to cover the flesh of nakedness. From their waists to their thighs, [the pants shall reach].
 43 [These are to be] on Aaron and on his sons [at the time that they come in] to the Tent of Meeting [or indeed] [when they approach] the altar to serve in the sanctuary, so as not to bear iniquity and die. [It shall be] [a law for the ages] [end aliyah] for Aaron and for his descendents to come.
 29:1 This is the thing that you [must do for them] to sanctify them [to be] [priests to Me]. [You must take all of these]:
 a bull—[one young bull] [from your herds], and rams—two of them, [without blemish],
 2 and bread [that is unleavened]: loaves unleavened mixed with oil, and wafers of *matzah*, coated with oil,
 from wheat finely ground you will make them.
 3 [You will then] [put them] in a basket—[a single one], and present them, in the basket, [together with the bull] [and with] the two rams.
 4 Aaron and his sons [you must bring] to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, and wash them with water.
 5 Then take [the holy clothes] [and proceed to dress] Aaron [with the tunic], with the robe of the ephod, [with the ephod itself], [and with the breastplate], and girdle him with the belt of the ephod.
 6 Then place the turban on his head, [and to it attach] the crown—the sacred plate—to the turban.
 7 Then take the oil of anointing [and pour it] on his head, thereby anointing him.
 8 Then his sons [you must bring forward], [and dress them] with the tunics.
 9 [And you will gird them]—belt them with sashes, both Aaron [and his sons], and place [upon them] headgear.
 [It shall be for them] [a priestly right], a law for the ages. You will thus “fill the hand of Aaron” [(i.e. ordain him)] [and the hand of his sons].
 10 Now bring the young bull before the Tent of Meeting.
 [They will place their hands]—[both Aaron] [and his sons] [will lay their hands] on the head of the bull.
 11 Then slaughter the bull before YHWH at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.
 12 Take some blood from the bull [and put it on] the horns of the altar with your finger.
 [Then all of the blood] [you will pour out] at the base of the altar.

29:13 [Next you will take] [all of the fat] that covers the entrails;
[and take as well] [the fatty mass] [over the liver] and the two kidneys with the fat that is [over them], [and turn them into smoke] on the altar.
14 But the flesh of the bull, its hide, and its dung, you shall burn with fire outside the camp. [A sin offering] it is.
15 Next a ram—the first ram—you must take.
They will place their hands—[both Aaron] [and his sons] [will lay their hands] on the head of the ram.
16 Then slaughter the ram, and take its blood, and throw it on the altar, all around.
17 [Proceed to take the ram] [and cut it up] [into its pieces], [wash off] its entrails, and its legs, and place them with its pieces, and its head.
18 [Turn it into smoke]—[the entire ram]—on the altar, a burnt offering it will be to YHWH.
A pleasing fragrance, [end aliyah] an offering by fire to YHWH it is.
19 Next you will take the other ram—the second one]. Then will place—[both Aaron] [and his sons] their hands on the head of the ram.
20 Then slaughter [this second ram]. Take some of its blood [and proceed to place it] [on the earlobe]—the ear of Aaron [and on the earlobe]—
the ears of his sons: [the right ear], [and on the thumbs] of their hands, [the right thumb], on the big toe of their feet, the right one.
[And proceed to sprinkle] [the rest of the blood] on the altar, all around.
21 [And you shall take] [some of the blood] [that is] [on the altar] [and some of its oil] for anointing;
[and sprinkle it] on Aaron [and on his clothing], [and on his sons], and on the clothing of his sons, [along with him].
[Thus made holy] [will he be] [as will be his garments], [as well as his sons] and the garments of his sons, [along with him].
22 Then [you will take from the ram] the fat and the tail [and also the fat] that covers the entrails, the fatty lobe over the liver, [and what is more]
both [of the two kidneys], the fat that is [on them], and the thigh [of the right leg]: [all this because] the ram of ordination it is.
23 A flat loaf of bread—[you will take one], a cake of bread [that is made with oil]—take one, and a wafer—take one:
from the basket [of unleavened bread] that is before YHWH.
24 You will place them all in the hands of Aaron and in the hands of his sons,
[lift them up] [and hold them high] [as a wave offering] before YHWH.
25 Then take these things [from their hands], and burn them to smoke on the altar, [along with the burnt offering]:
a pleasing fragrance before YHWH, an offering by fire to God.

29:26 Then [you must take the breast] [from the ram] of ordination that is Aaron's,
[and proceed] [to raise it up] [as a wave offering] before YHWH. It shall be for you, [an allotted portion].

27 [You shall consecrate] [these parts]: the breast [for the wave offering] [along with] the thigh [for the gift offering]
[that was held up] [and that was donated], from the ram of ordination, from that which was Aaron's, and from that which was his sons'.

28 [It is to be] for Aaron and for his sons, [by a law for all time], from the children of Israel, since a gift [it truly is],
[indeed, a contribution] [it will be] [from the children] of Israel from their sacrifices of well-being, their offering to YHWH.

29 [And the clothes]—[the holy vestments] that are Aaron's will be for his sons [after him]
to be anointed [in them], and "to fill in them their hand" (*i.e.* to ordain them).

30 For [seven days] [they must be worn] [by that priest] [who succeeds him] [from among his sons]:
the one [who goes in] to the Tent of Meeting, to serve in the sanctuary.

31 [And as for] the ram of ordination: [you must take it] and boil its flesh in the place that is sanctified.

32 [They shall eat]—Aaron and his sons—the flesh of the ram and the bread that is in the basket, near the entrance to the Tent of Meeting.

33 [Only they] [shall eat them] who [received atonement] [through them], "to fill their hand" (*i.e.* at their ordination) to sanctify them.
No layman may eat them, because they are holy.

34 [If there is left over] [some of the meat] [of the ordination] [or some bread], until morning,
[you must burn up] [what is left], by fire. It must not be eaten, since holy it is.

35 [And you shall do] for Aaron and for his sons precisely as I have commanded you. Through seven days, you will ordain them.

36 A bull for a sin offering you must prepare each day, as an atonement, [thus removing sin] [from the altar], [as you make atonement] [upon it].
[By so anointing it], [you will sanctify it].

37 For [a full seven days] [you shall make atonement] [on the altar] and consecrate it.
[Thus shall be] the altar holy of holies. [end aliyah] Whatever touches the altar, [will therefore become sanctified].

38 [Now the following] is what you must do on the altar: [you must offer up lambs]—[two yearling lambs], two of them per day, continually.

39 One lamb—the first one, you will offer in the morning. And [one lamb]—[the second one], you will offer at twilight.

40 A tenth measure of fine meal to be mixed [with pressed oil]—[beaten oil], one quarter hin, (that's about a quart)
[as a libation] a quarter hin of wine for [the first lamb].

29:41 The other lamb—[the second one], [you will offer] “between the evenings” (*i.e.* at twilight),
 [with a meal offering] [like the one in the morning] and with a libation [you shall offer it], for a pleasing fragrance, [a fire offering] to YHWH,
 42 [a burnt offering] continual, throughout your generations, at the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, before YHWH.
 Indeed [I will meet] with you [at that place]. I will speak to you there.
 43 And I shall meet there with the children of Israel, [the place sanctified] [by My *kavod*] (My glory or presence).
 44 [I will sanctify] the Tent of Meeting and the altar. [Also Aaron] [and his sons] I will consecrate to be priests to Me.
 45 And [I will dwell] among the children of Israel. I will be there for them as God.
 46 [And they will know] that indeed I am YHWH their God,
 who [brought them up]—[who took them out] from the land of Egypt, to dwell in their midst. [end aliyah] I am YHWH their God.
 30:1 You shall make an altar for the burning of incense. From wood of acacia, you shall make it.
 2 A cubit in length and a cubit in width, square in shape, two cubits in height, and from the same piece—its horns.
 3 You shall overlay it with [gold that is pure], [including its roof] [as well as its walls] [all around it], [and also its horns].
 [And you shall] [make for it] a rim of gold, all around.
 4 [And place two] rings made of gold [that you will make for it] under [the border or rim], on two [of its sides], attaching them on opposite sides.
 [They will be] housings for poles to carry the altar, [with them].
 5 You will make the poles from wood of acacia, and overlay them with gold.
 6 [You will place] the altar in front of the tapestry [that hangs over] the Ark of Testimony,
 [in front of] [the atonement cover] that sits over the Testimony, [the place I have appointed] to meet with you there.
 7 [Sending up in smoke] [upon this altar] by Aaron, will be incense of spice,
 morning [by morning], [when he attends] [to the lamps], [he will burn it].
 8 When kindled [by Aaron] [are the lamps] at twilight, [he will burn it],
 [an offering of incense] continually, before YHWH, [throughout your generations].
 9 [You shall not offer] [upon it] incense that is alien, [or a burnt offering] [or a meal offering]. [A libation] may not be poured upon it.
 10 Atonement by Aaron [will be made on its horns], one time every year, [using the blood] [of the sin offering] [that purifies].
 [One time] per year [he will offer atonement] [upon it], through your generations. [end aliyah] Holy of holies it is [to YHWH].

Len Fellman's English readings with tropes

The purpose of this project is to translate *THE SONG OF THE TORAH* into English.

I work by comparing as many as ten English translations of a *pasuk* and creating a cantillated English sentence that sounds as much as possible like the Hebrew. They follow the Hebrew as closely as possible, word for word and trope by trope. The English language has an amazing flexibility, making it possible to make the English word order match that of the Hebrew quite well, allowing for some “poetic licence”, and some willingness on the part of the listener to be “carried” by the melody more than by the English syntax. The translation needs to sound good when *chanted*, but not necessarily when *spoken or read*.

Unlike most translations, these “transtropilations” are not intended to be a substitute for the Hebrew. On the contrary, they are meant to provide a “window” into the Hebrew text and its musical expression. My ideal listener knows enough Hebrew and has enough interest to follow the Hebrew in a bilingual text while the *leyner* is chanting the English version, to bring the Hebrew text to life, both *verbally* and *musically*. For this purpose I use *exactly* the same tropes in the English as in the Hebrew (almost always on the corresponding English word).

The texts can be used to do **consecutive translation**, i.e. leyning a phrase in Hebrew, followed by the corresponding phrase sung in English. Some of my recordings demonstrate this. I do this frequently when leyning for groups that either know little Hebrew, or that don't have a *chumash* in front of them.

I favor literal translations (e.g. “cut a covenant”) to call attention to Hebrew idioms, and towards simpler (even if less accurate) words (e.g. Ex. 12:7 “beam above the door” rather than “lintel”) to be easier to follow. If my readings provoke a discussion of the Hebrew, I consider that as justification for using less-than-idiomatic English. I try to find just the right balance between “literalness” and “listenable-ness”. A primary goal is throwing light on the Hebrew syntax.

In order to adapt the trope symbols to a left-to-right language like English, I *reversed* the direction of the trope symbols:

mercha tipcha munach tevir mapakh *or* yetiv kadma *or* pashta gersh gershayim telisha katana telisha gedola

(Generally speaking the *conjunctive tropes* such as mercha, munach, mapakh, kadma, and telisha katana “lean toward” the words they “conjoin” to, while the *disjunctive tropes* such as tipcha, gersh, gershayim, and telisha gedola “lean away” from the words that follow, so as to create a sense of separation.)

The trope symbol is normally placed under the accented syllable, unless it is a *pre-positive* accent (telisha gedola, placed *at the beginning* of the word or phrase) or a *post-positive* one (telisha katana or pashta, placed at the *end* of the word or phrase).

The Hebrew text frequently puts a *makkeph* (which is like a hyphen) between words in order to treat them as a single word to be chanted. I use a different system for English: If an entire English phrase is to be chanted to a single trope melody, I place it between grey brackets, as in this phrase from the Book of Lamentations:

[clings to her skirts]

The *leyner* is invited to fit this phrase to the *Eicha* “rivi'i” melody in whatever way seems most natural.

As a variant of the “grey bracket” device, I indicate pairs of tropes by “wrapping them around” the phrase which have the combined melody:

mercha/tipcha	kadma/geresh (<i>or</i> : azla, etc.)	mercha siluk
(Renew our days)	(She weeps bitterly).	(a fire-offering to God)

Again, the *leyner* should decide on the most natural way to fit the phrase to the combined trope melody.

I put words in gray which I consider essential but which don’t strictly match the Hebrew. I also “pad” some phrases with extra words in gray to fill out a musical phrase nicely. Different trope systems vary widely in the length of the musical phrase used, so the words in gray may or not be used depending on the *leyner*’s cantillation system. In particular, the tropes *telisha g’dola* (ר), *legarmeh*, *metigah-zakef*, and *pazer* vary widely in the musical phrases used for chanting. (And please indulge me in my whimsical treatments of *shalshelet*.)

“*Metigah-zakef*” is a special trope combination which can be recognized by a kadma and a zakef katon appearing on the same Hebrew word (again, a *makkeph* makes two words into one). (There are several examples in Genesis 18 & 19, beginning with 18:16). I indicate this by placing the corresponding English phrase in grey brackets:

[Take heed—take care for yourself]

In some trope systems (viz. cantor Moshe Haschel in “Navigating the Bible II”) this is given a distinctive melody—I add extra syllables to fill out the musical phrase (as in “take care” in this example). Haschel’s system also chants the trope *munach* as *legarmeh* more often than other systems do.

I don’t write a single word of translation without first hearing the melody of the phrase in my mind, following one of two trope systems: The one by Portnoy and Wolff (*The Art of Cantillation*) or the one by Joshua R. Jacobson (*Chanting the Hebrew Bible*).

I transcribe the name יהוה as YHWH (in small caps). I almost always chant this as *yud-hey-vav-hey*, which I have discovered fits marvelously into several of the trope melodies. But of course the *leyner* can choose to pronounce it as “*God*” or “*Adonai*”.

Warning on the Hebrew text: The text I use for the English trope system is from Aryeh Kaplan; the Hebrew text I display is from Wikisource. Occasionally (but rarely) a phrase will use different tropes in the two systems.

The English translations I mostly use (besides several scholarly commentaries) are the following:

Aryeh Kaplan, ‘The Living Torah’ (1981) (also my source for proper names & transliterations)
Richard Elliott Friedman, ‘The Bible With Sources Revealed’ (2003)
Everett Fox, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (1997)
The Stone Edition ‘Tanach’ (1996)
JPS ‘Hebrew-English Tanach’, (2nd Ed. 2000), *along with* Orlinsky, ‘Notes on the New Translation of the Torah’ (1969)
Robert Alter, ‘The Five Books of Moses’ (2004)
Commentaries in the ‘Anchor Bible’ series
Rotherham, The Emphasized Bible (1902)
The Jerusalem Bible (1966) (also my source for topic headings)
The New King James Bible (1982)